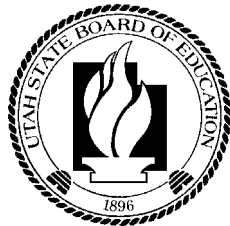


**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Gunnison Valley High School
35 East 600 South
P.O. Box 460
Gunnison, Utah 84634**

March 31-April 1, 2004



Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Gunnison Valley High School
35 East 600 South
P.O. Box 460
Gunnison, Utah 84634**

March 31-April 1, 2004

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

**Patrick Ogden
Interim State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

**DIVISION OF
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS**

Patti Harrington, Associate Superintendent

**Brett Moulding, Director
Curriculum and Instruction**

**Georgia Loutensock, Accreditation Specialist
Curriculum and Instruction**

Salt Lake City, Utah

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FOREWORD

A major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate inservice growth and school improvement. Consequently, requirements include not only meeting the standards of the Utah State Office of Education, but also completing a school evaluation every six years.

School evaluation is that effort by the local school staff to take a comprehensive look at the school's program, operation, and effect. The school determines how closely its purposes and philosophy coincide with its actual practices and the degree to which its stated objectives are being reached. It is a three-phased program: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, March 31 and April 1, 2004, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to meet the requirements referred to above.

The entire staff of Gunnison Valley High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Kirk Anderson is commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for the generally fine program being provided for Gunnison Valley High School students, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more adequately meet the needs of the students of Gunnison Valley High School.

Patrick Ogden
Interim State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

District 1

Teresa L. Theurer
66 Canterbury Circle
Logan, UT 84321
Phone: (435) 753-0740

District 6

Tim Beagley
3084 South 3550 West
West Valley City, UT 84119
Phone: (801) 969-6454

District 11

David L. Moss
1964 Hawk Circle
Sandy, UT 84092
Phone: (801) 572-6144

District 2

Greg W. Haws
5841 West 4600 South
Hooper, UT 84315
Phone: (801) 985-7980

District 7

John C. Pingree
1389 Harvard Avenue
Salt Lake City, UT 84105
Phone: (801) 582-5635

District 12

Mike Anderson
455 East 200 North
Lindon, UT 84042
Phone: (801) 785-1212

District 3

Edward Dalton
1323 Bryan Road
Erda, UT 84074
Phone: (435) 882-4498

District 8

Janet A. Cannon
5256 Holladay Blvd.
Salt Lake City, UT 84117
Phone: (801) 272-3516

District 13

Linnea S. Barney
1965 South Main Street
Orem, UT 84058
Phone: (801) 225-4149

District 4

Joyce W. Richards
930 East 5000 South
Ogden, UT 84403
Phone: (801) 479-5370

District 9

Denis R. Morrill
6024 South 2200 West
Taylorsville, UT 84118
Phone: (801) 969-2334

District 14

Dixie Allen
1065 South 500 West
Vernal, UT 84078
Phone: (435) 789-0534

District 5

Kim R. Burningham
932 Canyon Crest Drive
Bountiful, UT 84010
Phone: (801) 292-9261

District 10

Laurel Brown
5311 South Lucky Clover Ln
Murray, UT 84123
Phone: (801) 261-4221

District 15

Debra G. Roberts
Box 1780
Beaver, UT 84713
Phone: (435) 438-5843

Jed H. Pitcher*

Regence Blue Cross Blue Shield of Utah
P.O. Box 30270
Salt Lake City, UT 84108
Phone: (801) 583-2375

Sara V. Sinclair*

1340 North 1500 East
Logan, UT 84341-2851
Phone: (435) 754-0216

Patrick Ogden
Executive Officer

Twila B. Affleck
Secretary

**Board of Regents Appointments*

10/30/03

SOUTH SANPETE SCHOOL DISTRICT

BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Nancy Jensen	Member
Larry Smith	Member
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Donald Hill.....	Assistant Superintendent
R. Paul Gottfredson.....	Business Administrator
Janine Henningson.....	Secretary
Cherie Neeley.....	Clerk
Analee Knudsen.....	School Food Services
Lorna Larsen	Special Ed Director
Nadine Nielson.....	Technical Director
Boyd Donaldson.....	Vocational Director
Brian Olmsted	Programs Director

GUNNISON VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Kirk Anderson..... Principal
Trevor Powell..... Assistant Principal

Counseling

Linda Miller Counselor
Monica Jensen..... Counseling Secretary

Support Staff

Rolane Andreasen
Sharon Christensen
Shirlene Christensen

Annette Dyreng
Darlene Harwood
Carol Hyatt

Pat Jensen
Carolyn Squire
Lori Winters

Faculty

Jody Allred
Lindy Anderson
Mark Anderson
Kim Bailey
Les Bogh
Jesse Burrell
Jolyn Camp

Ron Dalley
Dale Harwood
Danny Hill
Kodey Hughes
Rhett Jackson
Lars Johnson
Don Kirk

Jeannine Lund
Mark Lyons
Guy McArthur
Angela Meacham
Mark Otten
Todd Petersen
Karen Willden

GUNNISON VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Gunnison Valley High School's mission is to provide quality education and support for students, develop basic competencies, increase effective social skills, and promote good citizenship.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

1. Our top priority is the student learning of academic subjects, supported by training in vocational, artistic, musical, and athletic areas.
2. Students learn best when they have appropriate opportunities for success, are actively involved in the learning process, and are challenged by meaningful tasks.
3. Commitment to continuous improvement is imperative to enable students to become confident, self-directed, responsible citizens, and life long learners.
4. Students who are willing and prepared to learn can be taught the necessary skills to become productive citizens.
5. A positive partnership and mutual respect among students, educators, parents and community, will foster student achievement and self-worth.
6. Students need to be actively involved in solving problems and producing quality work.
7. Because students learn in different ways, they must be provided with a variety of instructional and assessment methods.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Dr. Roy L. Hoyt, Hurricane High School, Washington School District,
Visiting Team Chairperson

Rick Pruitt, Richfield High School, Sevier School District

Marilyn Robinson, Bryce Valley High School, Garfield School District

Michael Pliley, Escalante High School, Garfield School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

GUNNISON VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

The first high school in Gunnison Valley originated about 1912. It started as a two-year program held in two rooms of the Washington Elementary Schoolhouse on West Center Street. The first principal taught several classes and was assisted by three faculty members. Gunnison Valley High School currently has thirty-six faculty and support staff members serving three hundred twenty-two students in grades nine through twelve. Gunnison Valley High School, located in central Utah, serves the communities of Gunnison, Centerfield, Mayfield, Fayette, and Axtell, which have an approximate combined population of three thousand nine hundred fifty people. The original high school was built in 1922, with a new gymnasium built in 1965. This facility served the valley students, grades seven through twelve, until the new school was built in 1981. As the school-age population increased, the building was remodeled in 1992, adding new front office space and nine new classrooms. A new middle school was completed in 1999, with the seventh and eighth grades moving to that building. A new gymnasium was completed in 2000.

Farming and livestock production remain a large part of the economic profile of the area, with other economic influences being mining and the Central Utah Correctional Facility. The Gunnison Valley Hospital, South Sanpete School District, Central Utah Correctional Facility, Applied Composite Technology, Wasatch Technology, Wal-Mart, SUFCO (a mine), and trucking companies are the major employers in the area. The economic climate of the area has experienced little change. Personal income in the county is the second lowest in the state, with an average per capita income of \$14, 419. The county unemployment rate is six point one, compared with the Central Utah area at five point four and the state at five point three.

a) *What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

Gunnison Valley High School has had a declining population over the last 5 years, losing 73 students. Growth potential indicators for the county project a twenty-four percent increase in the school-age population by 2030. The minority population is 13 percent of the total student population. The number of high school students applying for and receiving free and reduced-price lunch has fluctuated between thirty-three percent and thirty-nine percent over the past three years. Student mobility has decreased during the last four years. Parents of students with a GPA of 3.0 or higher attend parent/teacher conferences in greater numbers than those with a GPA below 3.0.

Sixty to eighty percent of students take the ACT. Many of these students have not completed the recommended ACT core. ACT composite scores have fluctuated between nineteen point four and twenty point two in the last five years. The math scores are consistently higher than the other scores. Gunnison Valley High School scores are below the national and state averages. On the SAT test, the total reading score is consistently lower than the math scores. The complete battery score fluctuated from forty-four to fifty-three percent over the past five years. The Direct Writing Assessment scores are below the district and state averages.

- b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

CRT scores, SAT 9 scores, ACT scores, attendance, Vocational Competency Test scores, and grades must be disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, special education status, ESL, income, etc. Disaggregated data is essential so that the school is confident of its knowledge of who is learning and who is not learning.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Disaggregated data needs to be collected and analyzed by the entire school community. This ongoing process will inform the school community of what decisions to make to improve teaching and learning.
- Collect data for the purpose of determining the success of second language learners.
- Further data pertaining to the community perception of the school should be collected.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

It is evident that the stakeholders at Gunnison High School made a concerted effort as part of the self-analysis. From interviews with parents, students, and staff members, it is evident that some of the stakeholders' perceptions are still unclear regarding the purpose of the process, as well as the how the action plan will determine the direction of the school in the future. Additional effort needs to be made to make sure that stakeholders are aware of and support the school improvement plan. The Visiting Team recognizes that the school and leadership

team have made a sincere effort to do a systematic analysis of the school's strengths and limitations, and commends them for this effort.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

Many of the school's strengths were clearly identified in the report. Additionally, the staff's high level of collegiality, passion for students, and willingness to engage in professional development opportunities were evident. As the school becomes more knowledgeable about using the self-study process to accurately identify student achievement gaps, examine best practices, and reflect on organizational practice, they will become more successful at identifying both their strengths and limitations.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Gunnison Valley High School's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1. Improve Communication Skills
 - Raise English and reading ACT scores to the state average or higher by 2010.
 - Increase the number to eighty percent of ninth grade students passing the DWA (Direct Writing Assessment) with a twenty average or higher by 2010.
 - Improve reading scores.
 - Train teachers in the Six Traits of Writing to increase quality of students' written work, and raise ACT, SAT and DWA scores.
 - Improve SAT language scores to the state average or higher by 2010.
2. Complex Thinking
 - Provide in-service training on Bloom's taxonomy to help teachers include higher level thinking skills in their assignments.
 - Instigate ways for teachers to demonstrate how skills learned in the classroom have practical use.
 - Increase the number of students taking higher-level math class.

3. Lifelong Learning

- Increase the number (to fifty percent) of students passing ATE skills certification tests at eighty percent or higher by 2010.
- Demonstrate self-directed learning goals through SEOP planning.
- Survey the percent of students going to college right after high school.
- Survey the percent of seniors receiving scholarships.
- Recognize and reward students for academic successes.

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

Where possible, teachers have been encouraged to work collaboratively in helping students get “real life” experiences from more than one class. Examples: (1) The tenth grade English teacher and World History teacher work together to help students prepare reports and read material relative to both classes. (2) The twelfth grade English teacher is working on a group project that is also useful to Senior Social Studies.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

The seven belief statements directly support the mission statement. Each statement is brief and concise enough to enable the user of the document to understand what should happen. They are further supported by the desired results for student learning (DRSLs).

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

It is evident that the mission statement and belief statements were written with the end result in mind. They support the overall mission and motto of the school very well.

Curriculum Development:

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

The staff mostly has used an informal approach to collaboration in curriculum design and alignment. The unity of the staff has promoted this collaboration. The school is at a good starting point, but needs more articulation of curricula within departments and among focus groups.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

Some efforts are being made to coordinate the curriculum across departments, but these efforts do not lead to a shared vision for student learning. There is limited use of research-based best instructional practices in implementing the curriculum within departments.

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

Gunnison High School has established a positive learning environment. It is evident that a variety of instructional methods are being used. The Visiting Team observed demonstrations, group work, questioning, visual aids, technology instruction, and direct instruction. The development of curricula is based in part on established standards for student learning. While many teachers are effective with these methods, the Visiting Team would recommend that all teachers continue to explore “best practices” that will actively engage students in learning.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

The Visiting Team observed a variety of auditory, visual, and tactile learning modalities among students. Some efforts are being made to align teaching practices, instructional support and resources, and assessment of student learning with the curriculum.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

Observations by the Visiting Team indicate that the professional staff is providing opportunities to support student learning. Teachers are available before and after school to assist students. Programs such as Upward Bound, PLATO, summer school, Educational Talent Search, the Electronic High School, Sanpete Academy, and Winfield Kids also provide support for students.

Quality Assessment Systems:

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or schoolwide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

The school's expectations for student achievement standards and performance standards are not fully developed. In cases where expectations of student learning are clearly defined, assessments of student learning are aligned with the essential knowledge, skills, and performance standards for student learning.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

The school has identified most of the information needs of various decision makers who use assessment results. The purpose of assessments is clearly defined and effectively communicated to stakeholders prior to the assessment. Students are provided with a strong support system from faculty and staff. Teachers are creating opportunities for re-teaching and peer support. Students are provided with some additional opportunities to demonstrate their learning beyond the initial assessment. The selection of assessment methods for student learning is not consistently based on the type of learning to be assessed, the specific performance standards for evaluating student achievement, or the purpose of the assessment.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

Teachers are using assessments designed to show basic understanding of subject matter. Assessment of student learning and grading practices is fair. In most cases, performance standards and criteria for judging student performance are clearly defined and applied on an equitable basis.

Leadership for School Improvement:

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

From all appearances and from visiting with teachers, it is evident the administration is very supportive of teachers. Teachers are allowed to teach without interference, but receive assistance when it is needed in dealing with situations that may arise.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

It is evident the data has been read and the research has been done. Teachers are encouraged to collaborate where possible, and indeed they are doing the collaboration. There is always room for more collaboration, however, and the research needs to continue in order to make the programs more data-driven.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

The leadership of Gunnison Valley High School has a good grasp of what the testing tells them. They understand the areas that need improvement and are actively working toward using that data. The action plans are evidence that the leadership and teachers are aware of what needs to be done and are working toward accomplishing those goals.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

The principal and assistant principal are both very visible; they are seen in the halls during class changes and at lunch. They are available to students. The offices of the principal and assistant principal are not separated from the school by outer offices, but are openly accessible to students. This is very “user-friendly” for students and teachers. It allows a more positive relationship to develop among all members of the school.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources, which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

The leadership of the school appears to be correlating with teachers, community members, and students in making these decisions. The principal does not dictate what will be done, but instead guides the discussions of what needs to be done and how best to accomplish it.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

The school leadership appears to invite input from all users. The principal is very approachable and seeks positive feedback and constructive critique. He has worked toward getting community members and teachers involved in all areas of the school climate.

Community Building:

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

Gunnison Valley High School is fully functional in this area, and this is one of the excellent attributes of this school. The learning environment is safe; the relationships between and among teachers and students are nurturing. The teachers are committed to the students and to their learning, and it appears as if the students are similarly committed.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

This school has excellent collaborative, working links with other schools as well as community businesses. There is a culture of job sharing and work release opportunities that are serving Gunnison Valley High School students well.

There is a national consensus to encourage a higher and more complete level of school-community interaction. This challenge also exists in Gunnison, and the Visiting Team suspects that the educators know there is a lot to do in this area. Gunnison Valley High School is to be commended for its effort to reach out to minority students and families; this is a real achievement.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

The school's organizational system and culture seem to be supportive of school improvement and professional development. There is a strong, district-wide and community-deep initiative to help English language learners. There are a number of teachers who are ESL-endorsed. There is an effort to connect with minority members of the community and to address the whole needs of the child. (The program includes home visits, working directly with parents, and helping students with clothing, food, immunizations, glasses, etc.)

A number of professional development initiatives have been identified. There is a professional development plan to add Six Traits of Writing curricula to those of all Gunnison Valley High School teachers. This is in direct response to self-identified challenges in the areas of literacy and collaboration. There is an appropriate and strong effort by the teachers to continue their expertise in the use of technology.

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

It is clear from the school's commitment to inservice that there are excellent conditions here to support continuous improvement. The teachers seem to have accurately described the areas in which improvement needs to occur. The accreditation team concurs with their conclusions. The professional momentum of this cohesive and well-prepared staff appears ready to concentrate on improving students' literacy skills.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Standard I – Educational Program

The standard is met.

Standard II – Student Personnel Services

This standard is met.

Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

This standard is met.

Standard IV – Library Media Program

This standard is not met. Gunnison High School does not have a licensed library media teacher. In fact, there are no licensed librarians in South Sanpete School District.

Standard V – Records

This standard is met.

Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)

This standard is met.

Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel

This standard is met.

Standard VIII – Administration

This standard is met.

Standard IX – Teacher Load

This standard is met.

Standard X – Activities

This standard is met

Standard XI – Business Practices

This standard is met

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) *To what extent is the schoolwide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

The action plan shows specific times to check the progress toward school goals. They are well-thought-out and specify who, what, when, and where.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, schoolwide and systemwide?*

The self-study process reflects the involvement of the vast majority of the school staff, and has buy-in from other stakeholder groups (parents, students, and the community). The Visiting Team is confident that the school community can and will implement the action plan and recommendations of the Visiting Team.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the schoolwide action plan appear to be?*

The time line is in place, and with the school's current leadership the Visiting Team is confident that progress will be made in reaching school goals.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends Gunnison Valley High School for the positive climate that was evident within the school community.
- The Visiting Team commends the teachers for their effective use of technology in the classroom.
- The Visiting Team commends the staff for its cohesiveness, which is a direct reflection of the administration of Gunnison High School.
- The Visiting Team commends the school's efforts to meet the needs of ESL students by helping to educate their parents.

Recommendations:

- The faculty has made tremendous use of collaboration. However, the Visiting Team recommends that this effort be expanded. All faculty members need to be involved in the process.
- There is a great deal of "stand and deliver" instruction. The Visiting Team recommends that the faculty explore and consider other methods of delivering instruction.
- The Visiting Team recommends the use of more methods of communication between school and home. The use of a school newsletter, local paper, or periodic mailings would be more effective in getting the information out to parents.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the disaggregation of data be pursued and implemented in order to determine who is and is not learning at the school. The resulting data can also be used to determine progress toward school goals.